

Presumptive Eligibility Assures Pregnant Women Receive Immediate Access to Prenatal Care

Presumptive Eligibility (PE) offers expectant mothers immediate health care while waiting to qualify for Medi-Cal. When a woman becomes pregnant, it is important for her to get prenatal care immediately. For women who do not have health insurance, the process of applying for Medi-Cal can be time consuming. PE assures California residents immediate access to early and ongoing prenatal care.

PE is a program that allows qualified providers, such as CBOs, clinics and physicians to provide their low-income pregnant patients with immediate access to prenatal care services before they are approved for Medi-Cal. Women can locate a PE provider by calling their local county health office that can give them a list of PE providers in their area. Women also can go to their local clinic, county clinic or a CBO to learn about PE providers.

Any woman who thinks she is pregnant and whose family income is under a certain amount is eligible for PE. A single woman whose gross income is under \$1,400 per month or a family of four with an income of about \$2,800 is eligible for PE. These benefits also include the cost of a pregnancy test. However, the PE determination must be performed by a participating provider. Once a patient begins taking advantage of PE benefits, she has until the end of the next month to file an application for Medi-Cal. If she files for Medi-Cal on time, her PE continues until the county makes a determination of eligibility or ineligibility. She will be eligible for PE until her eligibility for Medi-Cal is determined. If she fails to apply for Medi-Cal, her eligibility will end on the last day of the month following the month she was granted PE. Eligibility for PE is limited to once per pregnancy.

PE covers all walk-in prenatal care services except for delivery, family planning or optional abortion procedures. Prescriptions for pregnancy-related conditions are also covered. Currently, there are over 2,300 active PE providers in California and over 900,000 women have received PE services since 1993. By February 2001, over one million women will have received services through PE. Women

should ask their provider if they offer PE. If they do not, the provider should refer their clients to a PE provider.

Pregnant women can also apply for Medi-Cal by using the same mail-in application that is used for children applying for the Healthy Families Program or Medi-Cal for Children. The Healthy Families Program provides low-cost health insurance for children whose family income is too high for them to qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal.

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These mail-in applications are available in 10 languages (Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.) Also, trained application assistants throughout the state are available at no cost to help Medi-Cal and Healthy Families applicants complete the application. To obtain an application or be referred to application assistants call toll-free 1-888-747-1222.

In addition, pregnant women can apply for Medi-Cal at their county social services office or at a local clinic. Many clinics have county workers who can accept and process the Medi-Cal application and answer any questions.